
SECTION 6: ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

6.1 - Introduction

Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines mandates that an EIR: (i) describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project which would feasibly attain most of the basic project objectives but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant impacts of the project, and (ii) evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives to the project. This section describes alternatives to the Proposed Project that could avoid or substantially lessen significant adverse impacts associated with the Proposed Project, including alternatives that would not attain all project objectives or could be more costly. The alternatives may result in impacts that would not result from the Proposed Project. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(d)(3) states that impacts of the alternatives may be discussed “in less detail than the significant effects of the project as proposed.”

Three alternatives have been identified that could lessen or avoid some of the impacts of the proposed project. CEQA Section 15126.6(e) requires the consideration of not implementing any project at all, the No Project Alternative. In addition, the City of Newport Beach has identified two alternatives that could lessen or avoid the both some of the construction impacts and the long-term operational impacts associated with the proposed visiting vessel marina: a Reduced Marina Alternative and a No Marina Alternative.

6.2 - No Project

In this alternative the City would take no action at the Project site. Existing site features would remain and existing activities would continue (Section 3.2). The existing mobile home park is a non-conforming land use located within Parks and Recreation (PR)-designated area. The use conflicts with the Local Coastal Land Use Plan as well as the California Coastal Act since it is not a coastal dependent use. The project would terminate the existing lease to the mobile home park which is not a permitted activity in tidelands leasing policy. Under this alternative the non-permitted activity (mobile homes) would remain.

The No Project Alternative would avoid all of the construction impacts associated with the proposed project, including air quality (exceedances of criteria pollutant standards and LSTs, health impact), biological resources (noise impacts on marine mammals, interference with grunion spawning and migratory bird nesting; loss of sandy intertidal habitat), water quality (construction runoff and dredging turbidity), and noise (pile-driving and heavy construction equipment). It would also avoid all of the operational-phase impacts, including air quality (cumulative ozone and health impacts), geology (seismic risks), and water quality (poor circulation in the marina). The No Project Alternative would not achieve the provisions of the Coastal Act that encourage the maintenance and expansion of marine boating facilities and enhanced coastal access and coastal recreational opportunities.

The No Project Alternative would not provide the benefits that have been identified for the proposed project, including increased public park space; realization of a number of General Plan goals related to marine-related educational programs and recreational facilities, improved public coastal access, and improved emergency services access. Coastal access would still be hampered by the presence of the mobile home park, the awkward vehicular and pedestrian facilities, and the lack of community facilities. In addition, the No Project Alternative would not achieve any of the goals of the Marina Park Project.

6.3 - Reduced Marina

This alternative includes the development of the Marina Park Project with a visiting vessel marina approximately one-half the size of the proposed project marina. The proposed marina under this alternative would include approximately 12 slips and encompass approximately 0.5 acre of surface water area, compared to the 23 slips and approximately one acre of surface water area under the proposed project. The marina would include floating and landside storage for small boats and sailing dinghies, to support at least some of the educational sailing programs envisioned in the proposed project. This alternative would include all of the other features of the proposed project (the Balboa Center Complex, Girl Scout Building, beach area, children's play area, public park facilities, and parking), as well as an additional 0.5 acre of park in the area not converted to marina.

Construction of this alternative would be the same as for the proposed project (Section 3.3.2) except that there would be approximately half as much dredging and excavation, and fewer pilings and floating docks would be installed. Construction would require the same equipment and activities as in the proposed project, but the marina construction component would not take as long and would not involve as much pile driving, excavation and dredging, and truck and barge trips. Operation of this alternative would result in approximately 40 fewer vehicle trips per day and half as many vessel trips, but would otherwise be similar to the proposed project.

The Reduced Marina Alternative would reduce the magnitude of all of the construction and operational impacts identified for the proposed project except the geological impacts related to seismic risks, as those would be applicable primarily to the landside components of the project, and the impacts to sandy intertidal habitat, as those would occur in the part of the marina that would be built under either alternative. In particular, this alternative would reduce potential water quality impacts during operation because the marina basin would be smaller and there would be fewer boats, and it would reduce traffic because there would be fewer trips generated by visiting mariners. Although the impacts would be reduced, they would not be avoided: the Reduced Marina Alternative would have all of the impacts of the proposed project, but of a lesser magnitude.

The Reduced Marina Alternative would provide most of benefits that have been identified for the proposed project, including increased public park space, realization of a number of General Plan goals related to community and recreational facilities, improved public coastal access, and improved emergency services access. It would not provide the benefit of meeting General Plan goals related to

marine educational programs since it would not provide the facilities needed to support the City's sailing programs, and would only partially achieve the goal of the Marina Park Project to provide additional facilities to meet the identified demand for visiting boat slips.

6.4 - No Marina

In this alternative the visiting vessels marina would not be built, but all other features of the proposed project (Section 3.3) would be built. The area that would have been occupied by the marina would, instead, remain beach (the northern portion) or be converted to park (the southern portion).

Construction of this alternative would be the same as for the proposed project except that there would be no dredging, excavation, or pile driving associated with marina development. Up to approximately 1,500 round-trip truck trips would be required to deliver the 15,000 cubic yards of fill that could be needed for the upland construction portion of this alternative. Operation of this alternative would result in approximately 80 fewer vehicle trips per day and no vessel trips, but would otherwise be similar to the proposed project.

This alternative would avoid the degraded water quality that could occur in the marina. It would also reduce impacts associated with marina construction, including noise from pile driving (although there would still be piles driven for the buildings, the duration of pile driving would be much less and the activity would be farther from sensitive receptors); water quality impacts from dredging and dredged material disposal; air quality impacts from construction equipment (although construction of the remainder of the project would still generate emissions, particularly in view of the need to import fill); and impacts on biological resources (noise impacts on marine mammals, interference with grunion spawning, loss of sandy intertidal habitat).

The No Marina Alternative would provide most of the benefits identified for the proposed project, including increased public park space; improved public coastal access; and improved emergency services access. It would not achieve General Plan goals related to marine-related educational programs and recreational facilities, since it would not provide the facilities needed to support the City's sailing programs, nor would it achieve the project objective of providing facilities to meet the identified demand for visiting boat slips.

6.5 - Alternative Considered But Rejected

No alternatives to the park were considered and rejected. There are very few sites in the Lower bay that could accommodate a new marina. The City considered constructing a visiting vessel marina facility at another location. A potential site exists at a pocket beach that runs along W. Bay Avenue between 9th and 10th streets on the Balboa Peninsula. In this alternative, a small marina would replace the existing public swimming beach. The marina would be capable of accommodating up to 12 visiting boats (up to 40 feet in length) in slips and one or two larger vessels in side-tie-up at a long dock. The marina would include floating and landside storage for small boats and sailing dinghies, to support at least some of the educational sailing programs envisioned in the proposed project. The

marina would be configured similar to that of the proposed project, but would be approximately half the size.

Construction of this alternative would involve approximately half as much dredging and excavation as the proposed project and the installation of approximately half as many pilings and docks. A small marina services building with laundry, showers, and restrooms would need to be constructed.

Construction would require the same equipment as in the proposed project. Operation of this project would generate approximately 40 vehicle trips per day. This project would have all of the construction and operational impacts of the proposed project, although since the marina would be smaller the water quality and traffic impacts related to the marina would be less.

This alternative would partially achieve one of the objectives of the project (Section 3.1), to meet a portion of the demand for slips for visiting boats. It was rejected, however, because it would not accomplish most of the objectives of the proposed project, which are associated with redevelopment of the Marina Park site.

6.6 - Environmentally Superior Alternative

Based on the above analysis, the No Project would have the least impacts; in accordance with CEQA the environmentally Superior Alternative may not be the No Project Alternative; the No Marina Alternative would be environmentally superior to the proposed project and to the Reduced Marina Alternative, and would therefore be the Environmentally Superior Alternative.